

***TOWN OF NEWFIELDS BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JANUARY 2, 2007***

The meeting was called to order at 6:52pm. Selectmen present were: Wes Moore and Janet Smith. James McIlroy joined the meeting in progress. Others present were: Win Fream, Chief Reed, John Hayden, Mark Bouzianis, Jamie Thompson, Sue McKinnon, Lisa Zhe, and Alison Watts.

Chief Reed gave the Selectmen a copy of an Incident Report of a resident in town cutting down trees on town owned land without permission. Janet spoke with the resident involved and stated that it was only one tree that was cut down and it was already dead.

Chief Reed left some part-time Police Officer appointments for the Selectmen to sign.

The Selectmen went into a non-public session at 6:55pm per RSA 91-A3,II to discuss a personnel matter. At 7:05pm the meeting went back into a public session.

The Selectmen spoke with the members of the Budget Advisory Committee about the proposed 2007 Budget. There are non-discretionary items – bonds, trash disposal, and trash pickup that are increasing. The Town obtained the best deals available including keeping Bestway Disposal for trash pickup. The overall increase to the Town's portion of the budget, not including the bonds and trash is .05 percent.

The Police Department coverage will remain the same at twenty hours per day, but other lines were cut for a total increase in the Police Department budget of approximately \$2,000. over last year. Funds to be encumbered from the 2006 budget total \$9,980. which is the amount of two items caused by the departure of police officers. This decision was made at a prior Selectmen's Meeting.

To help with the cost of the Bonds for conservation land, the Selectmen will have a Warrant Article to change the percentage of funds to the Conservation Commission from the Land Use Change tax from fifty percent to zero percent for the length of the bonds – twenty years.

Wes, as a citizen, will present a Citizen's Petition to sell the old Post Office Building.

John Hayden asked if the Buildings and Facilities Committee Report was ever finalized. James stated that the members of the Committee gave a report to the Selectmen. It has not been reviewed or acted upon, but indicates that space is

needed.

Wes feels the Town needs to make do with what the various departments have for space at this time. The people of Newfields are paying too much in taxes now and can't afford to be taxed more in order to give departments more space. James stated that the increase in the budget for the last two years was solely based on school costs. Mark Bouzianis stated that the School District budget has been limited the last few years. This trend will continue for the next few years.

Mark asked why Newfields is not going with Rockingham Dispatch. He said that 24 out of 37 communities in Rockingham County use the County Dispatch and why can't Newfields do the same. The Selectmen taped the dispatch discussion portion of that meeting and will share that tape with anyone who would like to listen to it. Changing to Rockingham Dispatch would change Newfields relationship with the Stratham and Newmarket Police Departments.

The Selectmen laid out the logic behind their decision:

1. Currently the three towns back each other up for services and this would change because Stratham and Newmarket would not be on the same channel as Newfields and the other towns would not be monitoring the radio and hearing Newfields' calls.
2. Newfields currently uses Newmarket's jail – Newfields does not have its own jail.
3. There is a safety issue of the officer's getting needed backup in a timely manner.
4. Newmarket Dispatch gives additional services (such as knowing trouble spots that require immediate backup) and has excellent Customer Service.

Wes suggests that members of the Budget Advisory Committee listen to the tape. He and Janet were ready to make the change to Rockingham Dispatch until the meeting discussing dispatch was held. John Hayden said that he would have preferred to have the Budget Advisory Committee at the meeting discussing dispatch. Janet stated that all Selectmen's Meetings are open to the public and that they were not aware of the number of people attending the portion of the meeting devoted to dispatch discussion until that night.

The Budget Advisory Committee wanted the Police Department to work with the amount given to them. They stated that the Town needs to decide on 3 or 4 full-

time officers and the numbers of hours of coverage per day. James stated that the number of hours covered is a policy discussion and not a budget discussion.

The Selectmen will try to do better about notifying the Budget Advisory Committee of department meetings that involve the budget.

Mark Bouzianis stated that there is no format to the budget process. There should be a uniform format for a proposed budget and should require backup documents for each line item. He thought the job of the BAC was to cut dollars in the budget in light of the bonds coming up.

Wes stated that if the BAC did not exist, department heads would feel less pressure to save money and would feel free to spend more money. The Selectmen used most of the budget figures presented by the BAC and held the increase in non-discretionary spending to less than one-half of one percent.

John Hayden stated that he is willing to continue to volunteer, but wants to have his advice taken.

The Selectmen stated that they have eight months to come up with a format to fix the process for the BAC. The process needs consistency and the BAC need to know the expectations of the Selectmen. They said it is hard to get all members of the BAC, Selectmen, and department heads together at one time. Win Fream stated that the BAC needs direction from the Selectmen in the beginning of the process. The major concern is that departments are still going to continue to grow. Information on the budget is needed for the next few years, not just the upcoming year.

John suggests that the process change – some things happen each year with certain departments. The BAC and Selectmen need to meet with the department heads together, as a team. The needs of each department have to be separated from the wants.

At 8:15pm the meeting went into a non-public session per RSA 91-A:3II. At 8:30pm it went back into a public session.

Mark differs with the Selectmen. He asked if they are happy with the tax rate. He said people in town are struggling to live and to pay their taxes too. If you don't like the tax rate, what are you willing to do to change it?

John said there are no huge increases in population or development or new roads, no strip malls – so why such an increase in the police department budget over the last six years? Fifty thousand dollars could be saved by eliminating one full-time police officer and reducing the hours. Wes said any resident could present a Citizen's Petition to be placed on a Warrant Article to reduce the number of

police officers and hours of coverage. John questions why a fourth officer full-time officer was needed.

With regard to the library budget, the Trustees changed the staff from an all volunteer staff to a professional staff several years ago and the Town carries the burden for this expense. Can the library budget be reduced by grants or using more volunteers? The library needs a way to keep the level of current service, but at a lower cost to the Town.

The Budget Advisory Committee is not in favor of a buy-out for Town employees to not take health insurance through the Town. They feel that having the employees pay a portion of the cost will accomplish the same goal. The Selectmen are working on policy changes towards implementing an employee / employer percentage at mid-year.

The Budget Advisory Committee will put together a format for the budget process and get back to the Selectmen in four weeks. Wes asked if John and Mark would be willing to stay on the Committee to start the format process. The Selectmen would also like them to remain on the Committee in the future. He stated their work is very valuable to the Selectmen and the Town. John is willing to stay if a standardized budget form is implemented and if the department heads have the form prior to the next budget season. Win is looking for guidance and also needs to have the department heads voice their expectations for the next two years. The Budget Advisory Committee members will return to meet with the Selectmen on January 30th, 2007.

James thanked the BAC members for their hard work. He asked that the Committee contact the Selectmen if they have any questions in the future. John Hayden stated that the appreciates the call from the Selectmen and the opportunity to meet with them and discuss the BAC issues.

Wes told the other Selectmen that when he called Alison Watts to notify her of the Selectmen's decision to present a warrant article to the voters to reduce the Land Use Change Tax funds given to the Conservation Commission from fifty percent to zero percent for the next twenty years, she was very gracious and understood.

Alison stated that it is a very reasonable suggestion from the Selectmen. Personally she feels that the change is an appropriate and fair use of the Current Use Change Tax because of the added tax burden to the Town for the purchase of conservation lands.

Alison would like the money to continue to be given to the Conservation Commission and then refunded to the Town by the Commission. She would like to keep some funds available to the Conservation Commission in case some property

becomes available for conservation. It was determined that passing money back and forth would cause too much paperwork and also that the Conservation Commission has sufficient funds available to them at this time.

Alison stated that the map of the proposed Prime Wetlands must be digitized and the process takes two months. The implications to the town for the digitized map will be a maintenance fee of \$350. per year to keep the map updated. The Conservation Commission will receive \$10,000. back for the mapping of the first two tiers of the proposed prime wetlands. As the process for the digitized map is longer than expected, the Conservation Commission is not ready to present the warrant article to the town to designate prime wetlands.

Alison stated that Duane Hyde of the Nature Conservancy said there are no funds to pay the Town of Newfields for a NAWCA Conservation Easement. However, Newmarket agreed to donate land to the Nature Conservancy. Alison said that she is disappointed with the Town's decision on this, but understands the Town's position.

Alison stated that Ray Konisky of Newfields has taken a position with the Nature Conservancy.

The Selectmen will discuss the Personnel Policy on January 16th, 2007.

Janet made a motion to accept the minutes of the December 26, 2007 meeting as amended. James seconded the motion and the motion passed with all in favor.

Wes made a motion to accept the 2007 Budget of \$1,444,352. and the Default Budget of \$1,451,046. Janet seconded the motion and the motion passed with all in favor. The increased cost is because of the Conservation Bonds and resulted in a non-discretionary increase of .05% in the Town's portion of the 2007 budget.

Checks were signed.

The correspondence from Brian Knipstein, the Road Agent was reviewed. Nancy was asked to schedule Brian and Chief Reed to meet with the Selectmen on January 23rd, 2007.

The correspondence from the NH Department of Labor concerning Brett Wells was reviewed.

Correspondence from the Lane Law Office was reviewed.

Verizon correspondence was reviewed.

Comcast sent correspondence to the Selectmen regarding a rate increase.

The menu of services available for 2007 and pricing was received from Dragon Mosquito and reviewed by the Selectmen.

A motion to adjourn at 11:15pm was made by Janet and seconded by Wes. The motion passed with all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy J. Spencer